NIH OPENS ESNAP TO FEDERAL DEMONSTRATION PARTNERSHIP MEMBERS

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National Institutes of Health (NIH)
 (http://www.nih.gov/)

Effective January 1, 2004, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) invites all Federal
Demonstration Partnership (FDP) members to participate in its NIH electronic Research
Administration (eRA) electronic Streamlined Non-competing Award Process (eSNAP)
pilot. eSNAP, a component of the NIH eRA Commons system, enables extramural
grantees to submit an electronic version of the SNAP Type 5 (non-competing) progress
report through a Web interface.

Currently, 46 of the 780 Commons-registered organizations are authorized to submit
SNAP progress reports via the Commons. Since the start of the eSNAP pilot in
November 2003, users have transmitted a total of 762 eSNAPs to the NIH. To access the
eSNAP Web interface, institutions and users first must enroll in the Commons. Once an
institution is registered, an authorized business official needs to request eSNAP
functionality from the NIH eRA Commons Helpdesk by e-mailing commons@od.nih.gov
or calling (toll free) (866) 504-9552.

As part of the eSNAP pilot, NIH is testing potential changes in certain SNAP progress
report business processes. Therefore, before granting eSNAP access, NIH requires that
the participating institutions agree to test these new business processes through an up-
front agreement.

Business process changes that are unique to eSNAP include:

o Progress Report Submission: The current paper process requires submission of
progress reports 60 days before the budget start date.   eSNAP submissions are due 45
days prior to the budget start date, thus providing the PI & institutional administrative
officials an extra 2 weeks.

o Research Accomplishment & Other Significant Changes: Continues to be an integral
part of the progress report narrative; however, in the eSNAP system, the capability for
this data to be uploaded separately has been developed. Eventually this will allow for
periodic electronic updates throughout the budget period, not just annual submission.
One goal here is to provide NIH programmatic officials with information that could be
easily accessible for science highlights and/or congressional justifications.

o Citations: If a citation is published in a journal available online, the PI can include the link to the on-line journal in lieu of submitting a hard copy of the reprint.

o Vertebrate Animal IACUC and Human Subjects IRB Approval Dates: One significant difference being tested in eSNAP involves the reporting of vertebrate animal and human subjects approval dates. In the electronic process, these dates are not captured at the time of eSNAP submission. Instead, participating grantees agree to provide this data on a retrospective quarterly basis. NIH will provide each institution with a spreadsheet listing all progress reports submitted via eSNAP that involve vertebrate animals and/or human subjects. The institution will be responsible for entering the approval date for each project and returning the spreadsheet to NIH by the specified due date. The immediate goal of this type of data collection is to continue to assure full compliance. Once data has been collected and analyzed from a larger population of eSNAP participating grantees, NIH expects the data to support a permanent change to the business process; i.e., eliminating routine reporting of approval dates for SNAP progress reports.

o Key Personnel Report: Still required with every progress report; however, the eSNAP system stores the electronic submission to allow for easy access and update in future years.

o Submission Authority: The eSNAP system provides the capability for a grantee institution to delegate the authority to submit an eSNAP to the PI. This authority can be selectively granted; i.e., it need not be granted to all PIs. When a PI has been delegated this authority and submits an eSNAP to NIH on behalf of the grantee, an e-mail notification is sent to the authorized organizational official. It is important to note that the delegation of submit authority to a PI in no way lessens the responsibility of an authorized organizational official to comply with required assurances and certifications.

Users are welcome to visit the eRA Commons demonstration site at https://commonsdemo.era.nih.gov/commons-demo/index.jsp to simulate the entire eSNAP process from initiation through final submission. An eSNAP users guide is also available online at:
http://era.nih.gov/Docs/eSNAP_UG_August2003.pdf.

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